



For Immediate Release:

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Release: Comptroller Henry Presents Priority List for the 2022 Maryland Legislative Session

Comptroller Bill Henry presented his priority list to the City Delegation for the 2022 Maryland General Assembly during the second annual Issues & Priorities pre-session hearing Nov. 16. You can watch the full meeting [at this link](#).

Madam Chair and members of the City Delegation,

I'd like to use this time to discuss a few issues I'm passionate about and that can be tackled in the upcoming legislative session. This list is mostly built upon calls for action from my City Council tenure, but it also reflects issues that have come up during my first year serving as Comptroller and as a member of the City's Board of Estimates.

Car Insurance Equity

My office has met with local advocates and several members of the City's Delegation to discuss ways we can support a legislative solution to inequitable and racist car insurance rates that City residents face. Average premiums for predominantly Black ZIP codes in Baltimore City are 94 percent higher - nearly double! - than the average premiums in predominantly white communities in most counties, because insurers focus on where accidents happen when determining rates and not where the drivers in the accident actually live. If two drivers from out in the counties have an accident in the city, it is **our** insurance premiums that go up

from out in the counties have an accident in the city, it is our insurance premiums that go up. That's not right. A fair calculation strategy is needed and that can only be mandated at the state level.

Law Enforcement Pension Reform

The Board of Estimates has approved over \$14.1 million in law enforcement related settlements over the actions of police officers who were found guilty of crimes and fired. We are paying out claims for these officers' wrongdoings – yet the same officers are allowed to keep their pensions. If the City is paying for your crimes, we should have the ability to go after you for damages – specifically, your pension. Last year's Law Enforcement Reform Bill, HB 670, included a provision that would have accomplished this, but it was amended out of the legislation before final passage. I urge you to reconsider a pension forfeiture policy that would protect our bottom line.

I strongly encourage you to support **Senator Carter's SB 47 Pensions and Retirement - Forfeiture of Benefits - Law Enforcement Officers.**

Camera Revenue

Baltimore City Department of Transportation has an estimated \$1.5 billion in deferred maintenance that we need to tackle. While I am excited to see President Biden's Infrastructure package trickle into the City, this level of federal help alone will not address all of our deteriorating sidewalks and dangerous roadways. However, we do have an unfortunately-still-growing revenue stream of red light and speed camera revenue. Since the program was established in 2017, it has generated over \$80 million for the City. In that same time period, Baltimore has paid over \$5 million in settlements resulting from improperly maintained transportation infrastructure. Camera revenue should be fenced off and only used for transportation-related capital improvements NOT operating expenses like police overtime. The point of the camera revenue is to create safer roads for all users, not to backfill budgets.

I urge you to support **Delegate Lewis' HB 73 Baltimore City – Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School Programs – Funding.**

Digital Divide

I want to thank the Mayor for tackling the Digital Divide and urge the General Assembly to do the same, by identifying funding to support municipal broadband. Giving families access to the internet is a necessary strategy to fighting poverty.

Rental Licensing

The recent decision by the Maryland Court of Appeals concerning Baltimore's Copycat building disregarded the premise of the rental licensing legislation that I worked on. The need to ensure tenants access to safe and healthy housing has only been exacerbated by the pandemic. There are a number of bills that targeting renters this session and plenty of avenues to codify dangerous ambiguities. My hope is that the General Assembly will close this loophole this year.